



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter
1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



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September is over and the Battalion continues to perform extremely well under trying conditions. While the temperatures have dropped off, into the low 100s, we are as busy as ever. The Soldier's remain motivated, but are looking forward to the successful completion of our tour in Iraq. This month's newsletter features an article from HHD about Ramadan and its impact on their Soldiers, an article from HHC highlighting the Battalion Staff, a message from the TUAV platoon in Alpha Company, and an article from Bravo Company describing how they conduct signal maintenance.

RENEGADES

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HHD

By CPT Walker, HHD Commander

Hello FRG members, it is good to bring you news from Camp Taji once again. It has been a tough couple of weeks, but the Renegades have been hanging in there. One good thing the Fall has brought is a break in the heat. The highs have been in the high 90s and the lows all the way down to the 70s.

It was a proud moment in the PSD this month, when one more Soldier got to pin on his Combat Infantry Badge (CIB). PFC Inouye was pinned his CIB for Combat action against a determined foe. He performed bravely against the enemy and all of his squad members came out of the fight unharmed.



PFC Inouye receives his Combat Infantry Badge

This month both 1SG Apolinario and I got the opportunity to roll out with 1st Squad, PSD. They are the squad who is responsible for ensuring the safety of the Brigade Commander, COL James Pasquarette. The squad is led by SFC Andrew Bullock. The squad is comprised of all infantrymen, and while some would rather be out looking for bad guys than securing the Brigade Commander, all understand the importance of their mission. Every single member of the squad has earned their Combat Infantry Badge, and they are truly a professional team.

As we approach October, we enter into one of the holiest times for the Muslim Religion, the time of Ramadan. For those back at home, this holiday may seem very foreign. People of the Muslim faith fast from sunrise to sunset everyday and abstain from drinking,

eating, smoking or any other type of indulgence. This has affected all of the Renegades here as our Soldiers try to abstain from eating, or smoking in front of our Muslim brothers in arms. This is ever more important to some fellow Renegades. Some of our Soldiers are either practicing Muslims, or have family members that are, or were Muslims. One of those Soldiers works with me every day. SPC Justin Ravari, our unit armorer, and my gunner. While SPC Ravari was born and raised in the U.S. and is a Christian, his father used to be a practicing Muslim. SPC Ravari's father's family is from Iran, and SPC Ravari has told me many stories of his travels to that beautiful country. He remembers hiking up in the mountains with his cousins.

One of his fondest memories is of just simply eating with his distant family, sitting on the floor and being flooded with some of the best food he has ever eaten. He remembers being in Iran during the month of Ramadan, and remembers the activities, festivals, and closeness of the family. Every night they would break the fast and eat a large meal. PFC Ravari remembers how close the family was, and enjoyed his time there very much.

Another Soldier is SPC Mauricio from Morocco. The thing he liked about Ramadan was closeness of the family during this time. However, the one thing that he didn't like was that in his country sometimes people were forced to practice, even if they didn't want to. That is why the most important thing to SPC Mauricio, is that all people, are allowed to practice their religion freely. That is one of the reasons why our presence in Iraq is so important. A free

Iraq will mean religious tolerance, and mutual respect for everyone's beliefs.

There are many Soldiers throughout the battalion and the brigade that are from a Middle Eastern background. While their religions, background and culture may vary, from Soldiers born here in the middle east, to others who were born and raised in the USA, one thing they all have in common is they are proud to be American fighting Soldiers, and they are proud to serve and protect our great country, our values, and a free society for all.

Until next time, this is Renegade 6 out.

HURRICANE

BATTALION STAFF

By CPT Reed, HHC Commander

In the past month Hurricane Soldiers' performance went beyond all expectations. I want to highlight a section in the company that is often overlooked and unappreciated---the Soldiers in the battalion staff. These Soldiers are in personnel, intelligence, logistic, operations, and communications sections. They are the behind-the-scenes Soldiers that ensure the units under the battalion can talk across the battlefield, get their pay fixed, or get a read on the enemy activities. These Soldiers usually work at least a twelve hour day to ensure the units under the battalion's control are successful. Without these Soldiers, the battalion would not excel in its countless number of missions. I thank the Soldiers in the battalion staff for their unwavering commitment and hard work to getting the mission accomplished.

In September, HHC swept the battalion Soldier boards. The company took the Soldier of the Month and the NCO of the Month boards. Congratulations to SPC Amezcua and SGT Phillips!



SSG Williams, Communication NCOIC (S6), trouble shoots a communication system in an up-armored vehicle

NIGHTHAWKS

SHADOW ON THE MOVE

By 1LT Jeanine Frazier, Platoon Leader Leader

The past few weeks have been extremely busy for the Shadow TUAV Platoon. At the beginning of September, we received notice that our services would be required in Multi-National Division-North (MND-N). The Soldiers sprung into action, packing and checking all of the equipment for movement, including the ground control stations, support vehicles, launcher and aerial vehicles. Within a week of receiving orders, the Shadow platoon arrived at FOB Speicher, located near Tikrit, Iraq to provide unmanned aerial reconnaissance support for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.



TUAV Flight Line at COB Speicher

The newly formed TUAV platoon that is designated for 3-82nd will be joining the unit later this year after completing training. Our unit will provide a valuable intelligence asset in the meantime.

The platoon is supported by Headquarters, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) for the Launch and Recovery Site and Aviation facilities. This is part of the Army-wide transition of all Unmanned Aerial Systems to the Army Aviation branch. 1 STB's TUAV Soldiers work alongside the Hunter UAV, also a part of 25th CAB. The Soldiers went through a whirlwind orientation to the area and quickly adjusted to the different operating conditions. The experience gained during the first nine months of the deployment has proved invaluable during this transition. The airfield at FOB Speicher supports many different airframes that are not seen at Camp Taji and the integration of our Shadow platoon proved an education for the air traffic controllers as well as our operators. 1 STB's Shadow platoon is now laying much of the groundwork for the future TUAV platoons that will operate in this area. Also of note, LTC Cross and CSM Seaman, along with CPT Shermer and 1SG Welch paid us a

visit last week. During the visit they were able to present SPC Hayes and SPC Stiles with Army Commendation Medals for their outstanding performance in support of 1st Brigade, 4th ID.



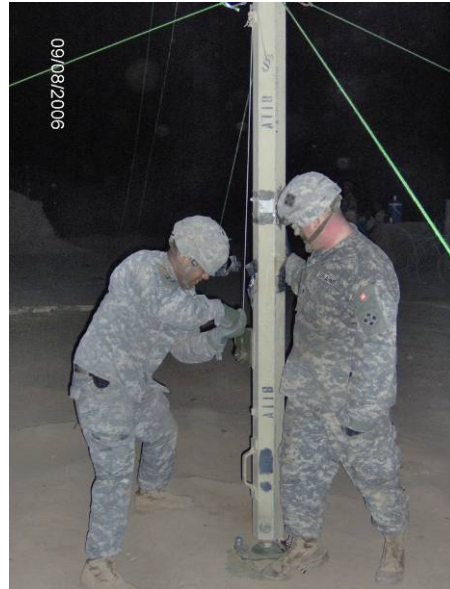
SPC Hayes and SPC Stiles are awarded with Army Commendation awards by LTC Cross

EAGLES

SIGNAL MAINTENANCE

By 2LT McMillen

Skilled personnel are required to install and maintain the many high-tech elements that comprise the 1st Raider Brigade 4ID Signal Network. The Joint Network Node and its KU band satellite terminals are the key elements that are vital for the network. This equipment was fielded immediately before deployment and requires subject matter experts on the battlefield for both operation and signal maintenance. When Bravo Company 1STB deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07 many assets were established to help provide and support communications across the battlefield.



SGT Garcia setting up a HCLOS antenna

The first assets are two civilian contractors that provide constant support, they are General Dynamics and Datapath. These two contractors play a huge part in providing all the means necessary to effectively support problems that may arise with the Joint Network Node and the KU band satellite operating systems. When any special requirements or technical expertise are needed, they are ready and willing to spring into action. For example, they fix problems such as minor router configurations on Camp Taji, to troubleshooting equipment at different patrol bases across the battlefield. General Dynamics and Datapath have a long and successful history with the Army communications support system and continue to provide stable and reliable support for Bravo Company throughout the battlefield. Another valuable asset for Bravo Company's signal support and maintenance is the aviation element at both Camp Taji and Camp Liberty. Aviation support plays a huge role in the prompt response when

signal equipment is down at other patrol bases. When Bravo Company is unable to establish a combat patrol, a flight from the Aviation BDE is vital. This allows Bravo Company to fly directly into a patrol base where signal equipment is down, so the Soldiers may asses and fix the situation.



Tiger Team suiting up before rolling out on mission

The final and most important asset that is provided for signal maintenance and support for Bravo Company's operations is the "Tiger Team". The Tiger Team within Bravo Company is made of elite NCOs, Soldiers, and Officers. These highly versatile Soldiers go out on combat patrols throughout the battlefield to repair and asses any signal outages that may occur off FOB Taji. This team is highly trained and deploy with rapid movement at any time. They help provide constant 24 hour communication capabilities throughout the battlefield.

Bravo Company and all the elements supporting the fight are continuing to impress the Raider 1st BDE of the 4ID. The Soldiers of Bravo Company continually perform above and beyond the call of duty. The morale is high and the Soldiers of Bravo are always ready to embark on new and upcoming missions. Officers, NCOs and Soldiers

are continually leading the company to success.

PHOENIX 6

Greeting from Camp Taji! Busy and tough few weeks for the battalion with the STB soldiers of the Phoenix battalion firmly in the fight and involved across all brigade operations. As pointed in the article by LT Frazier, our TUAV platoon has moved out to Camp Spiecher but they are doing exceptionally well performing just as they were trained at home station. We held a ceremony for our counter IED team Iron Claw this past week. This great team surpassed the previous unit's found IED total and has cleared 58 IEDs off of the battlefield since starting operations in January. Your soldiers are doing great things and both the Command Sergeant Major and I are very proud of each of them!

I would like to express my sincere thanks to SSG Carlos Dominguez and condolences to his family in their time of loss. SSG Dominguez was killed in action by an IED on 23 September 2006 while conducting civil military operations near Hor Al Bash, Iraq. SSG Dominguez joined the battalion as part of the CA Company in April and did a first rate job serving as the NCOIC of his civil affairs team. Many of us came to know him over the last few months and his loss was felt throughout the battalion. The memorial service was touching and was a combination of civil affairs soldiers and the STB soldiers – just like we operate day to day. The firing party for the salute was led by SFC Green and made up of soldiers from that CA Teams security detachment – all from HHC/STB. These were the same soldiers that were with SSG Dominguez

when he was killed and treated the other wounded including CPT Tovar and SPC Downey. It was one of the most touching ceremonies that I have ever seen and I think honored SSG Dominguez well. God bless him and his family. He will remain in our hearts and prayers.



To Dare Is To Do

Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army

John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding